



Strawberries

• Selecting fresh Strawberries

- Choose shiny, firm berries with a bright red color.
- Caps should be fresh, green and intact.
- Avoid shriveled, mushy or leaky berries.

Health Benefits of Strawberries

Strawberries are fat free, and thus saturated fat free; sodium free, cholesterol free (only animal products contain cholesterol) and high in both vitamin C and folate.

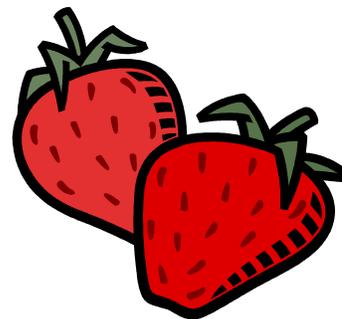
Freezing Strawberries without added sugar

Dry Pack

The dry pack is good for small whole strawberries that give a good quality product without sugar. Simply pack the fruit into a container, seal and freeze. A tray pack is an alternative that may make the fruit easier to remove from the container. Simply spread a single layer of prepared berries on shallow trays and freeze. When frozen, promptly package and return to the freezer. The fruit pieces remain loose and can be poured from the container and the package re-closed. Be sure to package the fruit as soon as it is frozen, to prevent freezer burn.

Other Unsweetened Packs

In addition to a dry pack, unsweetened strawberries can be packed in water, unsweetened juice or pectin syrup. Unsweetened packs generally yield a product that does not have the plump texture and good color of those packed with sugar. The strawberries freeze harder and take longer to thaw.



Things you should know about freezing Strawberries

Packaging should:

- Be moisture vapor resistant
- Be durable and leak proof
- Not become brittle and crack at low temperatures
- Resist oil, grease and water
- Protect food from absorption of other odors and flavors
- Be easy to mark and seal

Rigid Containers:

These include hard plastic and glass. They are usually good for liquid packs. Rigid containers are often reusable and are easy to store in the freezer. Choose glass jars made for canning or freezing. If the glass jar has a narrow mouth, be sure to leave a little extra headspace for the expansion of foods when frozen. Lids should fit tightly. If they do not, seal with freezer tape.

Plastic Bags:

These types of bags include flexible freezer bags, freezer paper, and heavy-weight aluminum foil. These are typically used for food items with little or no liquids. These types of bags are usually available in a variety of sizes and come with different seals such as zippers or ties. Regardless of the type, when sealing be sure to remove as much excess air as possible.

How to Freeze Strawberries

Preparation—Select fully ripe, firm berries with a deep red color. Discard immature and defective fruit. Wash and remove caps.

Whole Berries Syrup Pack—To make the syrup, dissolve sugar in lukewarm water, mixing until the solution is clear. Chill syrup before using. Use just enough cold syrup to cover the fruit after it has been placed in the container (about 1/2 to 2/3 cup of syrup per pint). To keep fruit under the syrup, place a small piece of crumpled parchment paper or other water-resistant wrapping material on top, and press fruit down into the syrup before sealing the container. Freeze.

Whole Berries Sugar Pack – Add ¾ cup sugar to 1 quart (1-1/3 pounds) strawberries and mix thoroughly. Stir until most of the sugar is dissolved or let stand for 15 minutes. Put into containers, leaving headspace. Seal and freeze.

Sliced or Crushed – Prepare for packing as for whole strawberries; then slice or crush partially or completely. To 1 quart (1-1/3 pounds) berries add ¾ cup sugar; mix thoroughly. Stir until most of the sugar is dissolved or let stand for 15 minutes. Pack into containers, leaving headspace. Seal and freeze.

Things you should know about canning:

General Information:

- You must closely follow instructions to safely can food at home.
- Carefully select and wash the food you are going to can.
- Peel some fresh foods.
- Acids are added to some canned foods to protect colors.
- Use proper jars made specifically for home canning and 2-piece lids
- Apples can be safely processed in a boiling-water canner or a pressure canner.

Adjusting for altitude:

- The higher the altitude, the lower the temperature in the canner. That can result in underprocessing and higher risk of spoilage and foodborne illness.
- If you can food at an altitude over 1000 feet you need to adjust for altitude.
- Find the altitude for your county seat by checking a State of Oklahoma map.
- Be sure to include the altitude information when determining processing times.

Recommended Canning Jars:

- Regular, and wide mouth Mason type jars with tight sealing lids are ideal. These come in a variety of sizes.
- Before using, clean jars with hot water and soap and rinse well. To sterilize, put jar right side up on the rack in boiling-water canner. Fill jar with hot water to one inch below top of jar, and boil for 10 minutes at altitudes of 1,000 ft. If above 1,000 ft boil 1 extra minute for each additional 1,000 ft.
- Seal lids tight. Once sealed, do not try to re-tighten the lids. As the contents in the jars cool, this will suction the lid to the jar.

How to Make Freezer Uncooked Strawberry Jam with Powdered Pectin

- 2 cups crushed strawberries or blackberries (about 1 quart berries)
- 4 cups sugar
- 1 package powdered pectin
- 1 cup water

Yield: About 5 or 6 half-pint jars

Procedure: Prepare containers, either glass canning jars with two piece lids or other rigid freezing containers with tight fitting lids. Sort and wash fully ripe berries. Drain. Remove caps and stem; crush berries. Place prepared berries in a large mixing bowl. Add sugar, mix well, and let stand for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Dissolve pectin in water and boil for 1 minute. Add pectin solution to berry-and-sugar mixture; stir for 2 minutes. Pour jam into freezer containers or canning jars, leaving 1/2 inch headspace at the top. Close covers on containers and let stand at room temperature for 24 hours.

To store. Store uncooked jams in refrigerator or freezer. They can be held up to 3 weeks in the refrigerator or up to a year in a freezer. Once a container is opened, jam should be stored in the refrigerator and used within a few days. If kept at room temperature they will mold or ferment in a short time.

How to Make Strawberry Jam with Powdered Pectin

- 5-1/2 cups crushed strawberries (about 3 quart boxes strawberries)
- 1 package powdered pectin
- 8 cups sugar

Yield: About 9 or 10 half-pint jars

Prepare containers: To sterilize empty jars, put them right side up on a rack in a boiling-water canner. Fill canner and jars with hot (not boiling) water to 1 inch above the tops of the jars. Boil 10 minutes at altitudes of less than 1,000 ft. At higher elevations, boil 1 additional minute for each additional 1,000 ft. elevation. Remove and drain hot sterilized jars one at a time. Save the hot water for processing filled jars. Fill jars with food, add lids, and tighten screw bands. Prepare two-piece canning lids according to manufacturer's directions.

To make jam. Sort and wash fully ripe strawberries; remove stems and caps. Crush berries. Measure crushed strawberries into a kettle. Add pectin and stir well. Place on high heat and, stirring constantly, bring quickly to a full boil with bubbles over the entire surface. Add sugar, continue stirring, and heat again to a full bubbling boil. Boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; skim. Fill hot jam immediately into hot, sterile jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids. Process in a **Boiling Water Canner**.

Recommended process time for Strawberry Jam in a boiling water canner .				
		Process Time at Altitudes of		
Style of Pack	Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot	Half-pints or Pints	5 min	10	15

How to Make Strawberry Leather

Leather From Fresh Strawberries

Select ripe or slightly overripe strawberries.

Wash fresh berries in cool water. Remove peel and stems.

Cut strawberries into chunks. Use 2 cups fruit for each 13" x 15" inch fruit leather. Purée fruit until smooth.

Option 1: Applesauce can be added to the pureed berries as an extender. It decreases tartness and makes leather smoother and more pliable.

Option 2: To sweeten, add corn syrup, honey or sugar. Corn syrup or honey is best for longer storage because it prevents crystals. Sugar is fine for immediate use or short storage. Use 1/4 to 1/2 cup sugar, corn syrup or honey for each 2 cups of fruit. Saccharin-based sweeteners could also be used to reduce tartness without adding calories. Aspartame sweeteners may lose sweetness during drying.

Drying the Leather

For drying in an oven line cookie sheet with plastic wrap. For dehydrator drying line tray with plastic wrap or use the specially designed plastic sheet that comes with the dehydrator. Pour the leather onto the prepared sheet or tray. Spread it evenly to a thickness of 1/8 inch. Dry the fruit leather at 140° F until no indentation is left when you touch the center with your finger. This could take about 6 to 8 hours in the dehydrator or up to 18 hours in the oven. While still warm, peel from the plastic wrap. Cool and rewrap in plastic and store.

Storing Leather

After leather has dried, cool completely. Then package in clean moisture-vapor-resistant containers. Glass jars or freezer containers are good storage containers, if they have tight-fitting lids. Plastic freezer bags are acceptable, but they are not insect and rodent proof. Fruit leathers should keep for up to 1 month at room temperature. To store longer, place it in the freezer.

For more information about food preservation contact your local County Cooperative Extension office. To locate contact information for your county visit <http://www.oces.okstate.edu/> and select County Office Directory on the left side. You can also visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation at www.uga.edu/nchfp/

Adapted for Oklahoma by Barbara Brown, Food Specialist for the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service and Claire Grady, graduate research assistant.

Source: National Center for Home Preservation, www.uga.edu/nchfp/

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